**Head of Regiment (BRIG Damian Hill)**

**Representative Colonel Commandant (BRIG Don Roach)**

For information:

LTCOL Matt Hodda (DHOR)

LTCOL James Groves (Liaison Officer to the RAAHC)

MAJ Terry Brennan

MAJ Gary Down

**motion – ORIGIN DATE OF AUSTRALIAN LOCATING ARTILLERY**

**Proposition:** It is proposed the RAA Regimental Committee consider the following recommended motion ‘out of session’:

**Motion:**

**The RAA Regimental Committee agrees:**

**1 July 1925 is recognised as the origin date of RAA Locating Artillery, and that the date is to be incorporated in Regimental and Army diaries for annual celebration on 1 July.**

**Key Issues/Background:**

* The attached brief by Colonel Paul Landford was commissioned by the RAA Regimental History Committee to obtain an expert view from an experienced locator on the desirability of recognising and celebrating an origin date for the RAA’s locating branch.
* A paper by Mr Keith Ayliffe promoted the idea that an origin date for RAA locating be recognised. It was received by me (as Chairman RAA Regimental History Committee).
* Australia’s pre-eminent expert in artillery lineage was consulted on the factual accuracy of the proposed date.
* If agreed, the centenary of RAA Locating will be celebrated in 2025.

**Action:**

* This brief is for initial consideration by HOR and RCC, and on their agreement for it to be circulated to executive members of the RAA Regimental Committee to ascertain their support.

**BRIG (retd) John Cox**

Chairman RAA Regimental History Committee

History Director Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

June 2023

Attachment

**DECISION BRIEF – ORIGIN OF THE AUSTRALIAN LOCATING ARTILLERY**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Purpose of brief.** This brief informs the RAA Executive Regimental Committee of a proposed origin date to be recognised for the Australian Locating Artillery.

**Scope of brief.**This brief:

1. presents for recognition a proposed, reviewed and supported origin date of 1 July 1925 for the Australian Locating Artillery
2. advises that it is a good fit in the context of all other recognised Australian Artillery dates and their celebrations
3. encourages that both the origin date and the 100th Centenary anniversary date be promulgated

**Background.** This brief draws on my review of:

1. a precis (with bibliography) **ANNEX A** by WO2 Keith Ayliffe (RETD) for an Australian Locating Artillery origin date
2. extracts from a draft section on key dates from the *‘Essential History of Australian Artillery’* (yet to be published)
3. the RAA Calendar as depicted in the Australian Defence Diary

**MAIN BODY**

Thank you for meeting with me on ANZAC Day at Mt Pleasant in Canberra when I was introduced to you by the Chairman of the RAA Regimental History Committee BRIG John Cox (RETD) in relation to this task.

I have been approached by the RAA Historical Association to submit this brief due to their trust that I carry the requisite qualification and credibility as a Locating Artillery emissary. I do indeed consider myself one of many proud ‘Locators’ emanating from a very accomplished stream of Artillery and I greatly admire and envy those still serving in it. Albeit dated to the 1980s I have served and held key appointments in three Divisional Locating Batteries (131, 132 and 133). Subsequently I have had significant postings as Commanding Officer 23 Field Regiment and as Director of Reserve Officer Career Management, Army. I have deployed to both East Timor and the Solomon Islands. In the latter I was the Commander Combined Task Force 635 for 12 months and received a Conspicuous Service Cross in the operational division in the Queen’s Birthday Honours. I currently continue service in Defence in various SERCAT 3 roles.

The attached precis is mainly constructed from the published book *“Tracks of the Dragon” A history of Australian Locating Artillery* – by Keith R. Ayliffe BEM & John M. Posener. The precis is assessed as requiring some more work by a consultation group or similar if it were to be progressed. Nonetheless, it persuasively aims for the recognition of a Locating Artillery origin date and contains further dependable research, detail, input and development to the published book with no known disagreement or dispute. It is deemed that Locating Artillery under its many names, and involvement in many operations and conflicts, will have been in the Australian Artillery family since 1 July 1925 to present day. The only small ‘hiatus’ was between 1946 to 1949 when the Army was heavily affected by discharge after WWII. However, the period straight after the war was characterised by maintaining qualified people for aspects of Artillery pending the raising of new units. The precis has been reviewed by a reputable member of the RAA Historical Association with positive critique supportive of the claimed origin date and the detail being:

|  |
| --- |
| The first Australian Locating Artillery unit to be counted as 1 Artillery Survey Company Australian Garrison Artillery (1 Arty Svy Coy AGA) at Victoria Barracks Paddington NSW established on 1 July 1925. (AAO 580/1925 of 05 Dec 25, Amdt No 1 to *Tables of Composition, Organisation and Distribution of the Australian Military Forces 1925-26*.) |

A review of extracts from a draft section on key dates from the *‘Essential History of Australian Artillery’* (yet to be published) yields no clash with other significant Australian Artillery dates and celebrations. Other 1 July anniversary dates supplied by Army, Navy and Air Force and Heritage History Units are presented in the Australian Defence Diary.

As nothing currently formally recognises the origin of Australian Locating Artillery I offer my humble support, based on the greater research work of others, in obtaining an official stance for an origin date. In particular, this will serve as an historical memory for all Gunners, serving and past ‘Locators’ and for the two ‘Locating’ Associations and members.

**CONCLUSION**

It is appropriate for the Australian Locating Artillery to have a date to recognise its origin. The proposed, reviewed and supported origin date is 1 July 1925.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Executive Regimental Committee:

a. **AGREE** to adding the Australian Locating Artillery origin date of 1 July 1925 to the RAA annual calendar and subsequently for inclusion in the Australian Defence Diary

b. **NOTE** that in the context of all other recognised Australian Artillery dates and celebrations this date is a good fit

c. **CONSIDER** promulgating an ‘Order of the Day’ to both recognise the origin date of 1 July 1925 and announce the 100th Centenary anniversary date of 1 July 2025 to the Gunner Community

**Annex:**A.               Precis *– The Centenary of Locating Artillery in Australian Artillery 1 July 1925 to 1 July 2025* by Keith Ayliffe BEM. BA. - on behalf of LSTAAinc (Locating Surveillance and Target Acquisition Association)

**Consultation:** I have confirmed thatthe proposed origin date has been communicated with the LSTAAinc, the 131 Locators Association, the RAA Historical Association and 20 STA Regt

**COL Paul Landford, CSC**Mob: 0413 542 118

Annex A

The Centenary of Locating Artillery

In

Australian Artillery

1 July 1925 to 1 July 2025



On behalf of LSTAAinc.

Keith Ayliffe BEM.BA.

Centenary Locating Artillery in the Australian Army

By Keith Ayliffe BEM, BA.

This precis is constructed mainly from the book; “Tracks of the Dragon” A history of Australian Locating Artillery- Keith R. Ayliffe BEM & John M. Posener.

This is prepared in preparation for 100 Years of Locating Artillery in the Australian Army.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the Committee of the RAAHC for their support and encouragement.

Thanks also to Maj. Russ Hamsey OAM, and Mr. Terry Erbs of the LSTAA Committee for their input and generous assistance.

This Precis is being prepared for the use of LSTAA.

**Foreword**

“Locating Artillery” which I believe best fits the many units in the Australian Army who have been tasked to locate enemy Artillery and producing target information for use by artillery or air force defence during times of hostility. “Locating Artillery” Units have also contained a valuable service capacity to assist Artillery in Survey, Meteorology and Calibration. . “Locating Artillery” Units have undergone several name changes, from CB units (British Counter Bombardment) to the current 20 Regt. RAA .

Towards the end of WW1, Lieutenant General Monash had his staff examine the possibility of 1 Australian Corps having its own locating/survey/intelligence functions, because of Government Financial restrictions this was put on hold. The final consequences of the findings eventually saw the introduction of survey units into the Australian Garrison Artillery (AGA). To facilitate the introduction Lt-Col (Brev) E.K. Smart DS0.MC was appointed as an Instructor at the Artillery School of Instruction, South Head NSW (24/1/22 – 24/9/23). He had recently returned from Larkhill, England where he had been attending a long course in Survey, Sound Ranging and Flash Spotting. He would assist in the establishment of a survey wing in the preparations of establishing Artillery Survey units.

They were called survey units because at that time their major function was to supply survey to the gun units to improve accuracy. Locating En Guns was a secondary feature of the units.

**PART 1**

**The Artillery Survey era 1925 – 1949**

The commencement of “Locating Artillery in Australia began with the raising on **1st July 1925 of 1 Arty Svy Coy AGA** at Victoria Barracks Paddington NSW and 2 Arty Svy Coy AGA at Argyle St, St Kilda VIC (Ref.1) Both these units were attached as part of Australian Garrison Artillery (AGA) and came under control of the Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Heavy Artillery. These units contained many professional people, particularly qualified and registered civil land Surveyors, who would supply not only their knowledge but also their own equipment (i.e., Theodolites and Slide Rules)

During the next five years both units trained along similar lines. To co‑ordinate training, the Artillery School of Instruction, commenced courses of instruction in late 1925 under the guidance of Major H. C. Bundock DSO, who had been Brigade Major, 1st Division Artillery from 1921-24 before assuming the newly created position of CI of Survey Wing, Artillery School of Instruction 1925-26.

The courses followed the British pattern of survey as laid down by the first `Manual of Artillery Survey' issued in 1924 by the British War Office. (The 'Manual of Flash Spotting' and the 'Manual of Sound Ranging' were issued a few years later.) Most of these were mobile courses where instructors from the Artillery Schools of Instruction conducted courses within the units. Lt-Col Smart would make a brief sojourn back to Survey when he became the officiating instructor for 2 Survey Company (2 Svy Coy) AGA from 1/6/31 to 25/10/31.

In 1932, a new organisation was about to be born when the responsibility for 'Flash Spotting' and 'Sound Ranging’ was placed under control of the Artillery Survey Companies. The Survey Companies now comprised three troops, Survey, Sound Ranging and Flash Spotting.

These innovative changes were the work of three key people. Major A.A. Powell, (then working for the Imperial General Staff at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne) suggested to Major Whitelaw, the Chief Instructor at the Artillery School of instruction, that the British establishment of the Artillery Survey Company be adopted. This concept was accepted, and Major H.C. Bundock, DSO, formulated the final details.

In 1932, both units became independent of the Australian Garrison Artillery

**1st Artillery Survey Company RAA**

1st Artillery Survey Company (l Arty Svy Coy) (Militia) AGA used 'Green Hills' training area, approximately 20 miles southwest of Sydney, the present day range control at Holsworthy, Sydney.

Although this report was not tabled in Parliament until March 1939, the Government accepted Squires recommendation about the Militia and inaugurated a recruiting campaign. The public was acutely aware of events in Europe and responded well. By the end of 1938, the strength of the Militia was 43,000, by March 1939 when the report was tabled it had reached 70,000.

The effect especially on l Svy Coy was immediate. With the influx of new recruits the unit in **June1939** was re‑designated **1 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment (Ref. 2)**

0n 3 September 1939 **1 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment RAA** moved to Dapto, on the NSW south coast near Woolongong, to commence the Unit annual two-week camp. That night war (WWII) was declared.(Ref. 2)

**2nd Artillery Survey Company AGA**

In 1937, 2 Arty Svy Coy moved to the Grattan Street Drill Hall in Carlton, Victoria. Major R. 0. Cherry commanded the unit from late 1937, which included;

* Survey Troop ‑ Captain S. Atkinson
* Flash Spotting Troop ‑ Captain J.D. Thorpe
* Sound Ranging Troop ‑ Captain J. R Callow

Capt. A.G. Rylah, 15 Fd Bde, as Militia Acting Adjutant & Temporary Quartermaster of 2 Arty Svy Coy (4 Light Horse Division, 3 Mil District) on 9 March 1937. (Ref. 3) Capt. Rylah was later to become better known as Sir Arthur Rylah the Chief Secretary under Sir Henry Bolte Premier of Victoria in the 1960’s.

Ref. 3 AA087/1937 (Army posting document)

The unit underwent many name changes in a very short period.

The Dates are from a planning notebook and may not be the exact date of name changes.

Jan/Feb 1939 - 2 Svy Coy

13 July 1939 - 2 Arty Svy Coy

9 Sep 1940 - 2 Svy Coy RAA (M)

27 Nov 1940 - 2 Fd Svy Regt

1 May1941 - 2 Svy Regt RAA ([M)

Officially in Feb 1941 2 Svy Coy became **2 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment** **RAA** (M)

**Note:** Although these units both started out as Survey only, there appears no doubt that they were established to fulfill Monash’s aim of locating units based on the British version. To start with, there would not have been enough trained personnel at that time. I contend this must be the commencement of Locating in Australia therefore in my opinion the start of “Locating Artillery” was 1 July 1925.

**The Artillery Survey Regiments 1939 – 1942**

**1 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment RAA**

l Aust Svy Regt began training at Greenhills, New South Wales but conducted most of its training camps in the Hunter River Region.

Commanded by Lt. Col. B. Hunter.

**2 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment.RAA**

In June 1940 Captain S. Atkinson was promoted to Major and assumed command of 2 Svy Coy and in Feb 1941 2 Svy Coy became **2 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment**.

**2/1 Artillery Survey Regiment RAA (AIF)**

On 1st June 1940, the 2/1 Australian Survey Regiment RAA (AIF) was raised as a unit of 1Australian Corps Artillery. It was raised at the Sydney Showground NSW and Caulfield racecourse Vic, with 75% of its initial strength coming from 2 Artillery Survey Company and 1st Australian Survey Regiment.

Lieutenant Colonel R.O. Cherry (formerly 2 Artillery Survey Company) with Major J.J.W. Gray (formerly 1 Artillery Survey Company) as Second in Command (2IC) and Regimental Sergeant Major N.G.W. (Norm) Anderson, who had been the Company Sergeant Major of 2 Artillery Survey Company, commanded the unit.

Lt. Col. Cherry took an active role in manning and staffing his unit, by interviewing a majority of the enlisted men and personal selection of the unit staff.

The unit thus became one of the most erudite units in the Australian army, with most of its members having completed secondary and tertiary education.

The Regiment moved from Greta to Cowra on 5 September 1940, its strength was 428 all ranks. Of the seven months at Cowra most was spent on continuation training.

2/1st Australian Survey Regiment embarked for the Middle East on Good Friday 1941 on the "Queen Elizabeth" changing to HMS "City of London" for the journey up the Suez Canal. The unit disembarked at Kantara, then traveled by train to Gaza in Palestine.

C Troop, a composite troop drawn from the Sound Ranging Battery and comprising mainly earlier enlistments with the maximum of training, was assigned to take part in this campaign. The troop was commanded by Captain Ivan Reynolds, Lieutenant Len Blessington (second in charge) and Lieutenant Morris Stephenson were the other officers, supported by two survey parties, linesmen and microphone sections, plotting centre personnel, troop HQ, Motor Transport (MT) drivers, cook and medical orderly. Along with A Troop (Flash Spotters) this troop left Hill 95 camp on the evening of 3 July, entrained at El Majdal railway station and traveled overnight arriving at Haifa at 1000 hrs. the next day.

2/1 Australian Svy Regt underwent a re-organisation of the unit to better accommodate the requirements of the Divisional Artillery

See Annex A for Organisation Chart of 2/1 Aust Svy Regt R.A.A (A.I.F)

**1 Battery**

1 Battery was attached to 6th Australian Division and comprised:

* B Troop (Flash Spotting)
* C Troop (sound Ranging)
* F Troop (survey)

Captain W.E.R. (Tassie) Burke was appointed Battery Commander (BC).

Captain Ivan Reynolds commanded C Troop and Lieutenant Ed Spreadborough became second in command.

**2 Battery**

2 Battery comprised:

* A Troop (Flash Spotting),
* D Troop (Sound Ranging)
* E Troop (Survey).

2 Battery moved to "Rocky Ridge" near Zgharta just inland from Tripoli and was attached to 7th Australian Division Artillery. They took part in the Syrian campaign and were deployed during the attack on Damascus.

HQ Troop for three months in the Middle East retained its separate identity, but then its members were divided between B and F Troops and were never reformed as a separate troop.

D Troop moved out from the Poplars camp to Beirut on 28 September and while there, received reinforcements from the Artillery Training Regiment located at Nusierat in Palestine.

F Troop and E Troop contained three sections, administrative and drafting/plotting section and a Left and Right Section. The Left and Right Section comprised an officer, Sergeant and two survey parties, plus drivers, etc. After the initial training at Hill 95, these sections operated quite separately for extended periods.

2/1 Aust .Arty Survey Regiment was withdrawn from Lebanon early in 1942 and returned to Australia.

In early 1942, 2/1 Aust Svy Regt embarked from the Middle East on USN Transport Ship USS Westpoint and returned to Australia. After a period in the Barossa Valley in South Australia, the unit was moved to Queensland between Ipswich and Esk.

When 2/1 Survey Regiment was disbanded Lieutenant Colonel Dick Cherry wrote "Concluding Remarks" as the last entry for the Unit War Diary (Ref.4)

**Defence of Australia**

The Defence of Australia was now paramount in the military program and the militia units would form the bulk of the defence units with most of the AIF committed to overseas service. The defence of Australia was planned against a possible Japanese invasion.

In August 1942, 2/1 Aust. Survey Regiment was reformed into four independent batteries (2 ‑ Survey Batteries and 2 ‑ Flash Spotting Batteries) and to keep the art of Sound Ranging viable a Sound Ranging Cadre of one officer and twenty ORs was established at the School of Artillery at Holsworthy, N.S.W

In August 1942 the l Aust Arty Svy Regt. RAA and 2 Aust Arty Svy Regt. RAA were reformed into independent Batteries:

**l Aust Svy Regt Became**

* l Survey Battery Major J Redapple
* 3 Survey Battery Major C T Smith
* 5 Survey Battery Major K J Wood
* 2 Flash Spotting Battery Major R V Stewart

**2 Aust Svy Regt Became**

* 2 Svy Battery Major A L H Dundas (Served in WW1)
* 4 Svy Battery Major F R Tait
* 4 Flash Spotting Battery Major I.D. Thorpe

AHQ allocated each unit to either a CRA of a division, CsCRA of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Australian Corps or BRAs of 1st and 2nd Army, until the end of hostilities. The casualty of the re-organisation was Sound Ranging and as Sound Ranging was being shelved in Australia, Allied Forces in the Middle East, and later in North West Europe, were being issued with more accurate equipment (4-pen recorder) and competing with mortar locating field radars.

**The RAA “Locating Batteries”**

**1 Survey Battery RAA**

* Raised; 1942 Aug Warwick Farm NSW. -----under Command CRA 1 Div
* Transferred: 1943 Jun Homebush NSW
  + - 1943 Oct Narellan NSW
    - 1944 Apr Greta NSW
    - 1944 Jun Helidon Qld
* Disbanded: 1944 Oct

**2 Survey Battery RAA**

* Raised; 1942 Aug Springvale, Vic. --------- under Command CRA 2 Div
  + - 1942 Oct Gingin WA
    - 1942 Dec Rockingham WA
    - 1943 Feb Greenough WA
    - 1944 Jan Northam WA
    - 1944 May 48 Mile Peg NT
    - 1945 Jan Greta NSW
* Disbanded 1945 Apr

**4Survey Battery RAA**

* Raised; 1942 Aug Springvale Vic under Command CRA 4 Div
  + - 1942 Sept Irwin & Pinjara WA
    - 1943 Jan Dandaragan WA
    - 1943 Mar Greenmount WA
    - 1943 Apr Hope Valley WA
    - 1944 Feb Kwinana WA
    - 1944 Apr Guildford WA
    - 1944 Oct Mapee Qld under Command CRA 11 Div
    - 1945 Jan under Command CCRA 1 Corps
    - 1945 Apr
    - 1945 Jul New Britain. under Command CRA 11 Div

Disbanded: 1945 Oct

**2 Flash Spotting Battery RAA**

* Raised;
* 1942 Aug Warwick Farm NSW under Command CCRA 2 Corps
* 1942 Sep Neurum Qld
* 1943 Jan under Command BRA 1st Army
* Disbanded Dec 1945

**4 Flash Spotting Battery RAA**

Raised

1942 Aug Springvale Vic under Command BRA 2nd Army

* + - 1942 Nov Narellan NSW
    - 1944 Jan Wallgrove NSW
    - 1944 Apr RAA Depot Greta NSW.
* Disbanded. 1944 Jul - Many of members would join 2/3 Flash Spotting Battery

**2/1 Flash Spotting Battery RAA (AIF)**

One hundred and twenty six men voluntarily transferred from 2/1 Artillery Survey Regiment to form the new 2/1 Australian Flash Spotting Battery. The officers and majority of the men had come from A Troop (Flash Spotters) and the remainder (about thirty) from C and D Troops (Sound Rangers), E Troop (Survey) and RHQ.

Captain W.B. Tully was appointed as Officer Commanding with Lieutenant D.F. Lewis as Acting Battery Captain and Lieutenant G.A.J. Wyeth and E.K. Robinson as Troop Commanders

The Battery came under command of HQ, RAA, 1st Australian Corps and had a high proportion of professionally qualified men: surveyors, architects, engineers, and draftsmen. It was not surprising that later many of these men would get "itchy feet" and seek transfer to other units where their civilian skills could be employed more usefully to further the war effort.

Late in 1943 the **4th Australian Flash Spotting Battery** was disbanded, and most of its personnel were transferred to 2/1 Flash-Spotting Bty. It was almost a merger when OC Major J.D. Thorpe assumed command and Lieutenant Colin McDonald became Bty Captain. Major Bill Tully, who had borne the brunt of a difficult two years, was seconded to MGRA.

The Battery was disbanded on **13 November 1945**. It was the only Australian Army Flash Spotting Battery on ORBAT on Armistice Day 1945

**2/3 Flash Spotting Battery RAA (AIF)**

2/3 Flash Spotting Battery RAA was formed from the majority of men coming from B Troop, and the balance from C Troop and BHQ, 1 Battery. (Six men with WX numbers transferred from 2 Battery as it was thought that the unit might be going to Western Australia, which it did.)

The strength of the unit was 5 officers, (including a reinforcement officer) and 120 ORs, (including first reinforcements and an AAMC corporal). There was much activity regarding the transfer of stores and the establishment of a self-contained separate unit. Training continued at Arakoon

A depleted unit comprising 2 officers and 27 ORs arrived at Brisbane on 15 October 1944 and by the end of the month, at Mapee on the Atherton Tablelands.

**Locating in the Pacific**

**2/6 Survey Battery RAA (AIF)**

Following the disbandment of the 2/1 Australian Artillery Survey Regiment, F Troop became the 2/6 Survey Battery attached to the Australian 6th Division. Thus the history of the 2/6 Survey Battery RAA traces the history of the old 'F' Troop of the 2/1 Survey Regiment.

**2/6 Survey Battery**

The Officer Commanding was Major Eric Robinson and the 2IC was Captain C.E.H. Rich, both held similar positions in the old 'F' Troop. The Lieutenants were Wally Cridland, Frank Kell and Bob Britton.

In January 1943 the move north began and after reaching Gladstone by rail the battery boarded the M.V. “Duntroon" for Townsville. From there on 19 January, the troops boarded the M.V. "Taroona" and arrived in Port Moresby on the 21st. They camped at the 7 Mile Airstrip and experienced the bombings.

The 2/6 Survey Battery became heavily involved in the Wau-Salamaua Campaign and recognised in a small way, by the award of the M.B.E. to Captain Cecil Rich, while Sergeant Tom Lenehan and Bombardier Frank Bailey were both mentioned in dispatches (MID).

In early November, half the battery under the command of Lieutenant Frank Kell joined the Australian 7th Division in the Kamu Valley, in the inland push towards the capture of Madang on the Northern Coast of New Guinea.

On 30 January 1944, the battery embarked on the 'Van Den Bosch' at Lae and set out for the return journey to Australia, disembarking at Townsville on the 11 February to begin a well-earned leave.

At the conclusion of the Wewak Campaign the following decorations were gazetted:

* Major Eric N. Robinson. OBE;
* Lieutenant Bob. T. Britton, MBE;
* Lieutenant Frank F. Kell MBE;
* Bombardier Ken. R. Glasson, BEM.

**The 2/6 Survey Battery returned to Australia in late 1945 and disbanded.**

Note. Further information may be obtained from a pamphlet. 2/6 Survey Regiment By David Warner.

**2/7 Survey Battery RAA (AIF)**

The 2/7 Australian Survey Battery RAA became a part of 7th Division Artillery. Most of the personnel for this battery were from the former 'E' Troop, with others transferring from other batteries of the old 2/1 Australian Survey Regiment

**On Friday 2 October 1942**, a warning order arrived giving 48 hours notice for embarkation to New Guinea. The Unit entered Moresby Harbour on **Tuesday 10 November 1942** and were taken ashore by barge and then transported to Murray Barracks Transit Camp about 4 miles from the wharf.

This was to be the Battery's headquarters for the next 12 months. The Battery's immediate task was to provide survey control for Coastal Defence artillery positions. The task was covered as follows:

* + - 1 Section - Bootless Bay Lieutenant Prince in command
    - 2 Section - Boerabada Lieutenant Wing in command
    - 3 Section - Paga Lieutenant Dent in command

When this work was completed, HQ Section commenced a detailed survey of Varol Headland (Marvarvole) across the bay from Port Moresby.

**The Buna‑Gona campaign**

This was destined to be a bloody conflict, the most merciless in the entire New Guinea campaign. The determined Australian/ American forces smashed the Japanese.

Veterans of the Kokoda Trail plus elements of the US 126th Infantry Regiment (32nd Division). These GIs had also walked from Port Moresby along the Kapa Kapa trail, a track over the Owen Stanleys parallel to but east of the Kokoda trail with no Japanese to hinder them but with higher mountains and rougher terrain to contend with and with no support.

On 2 December 1942, **number 2 Section under command of Lieutenant Wing**, began preparing for a move over the Owen Stanleys to Buna. However bad weather delayed the move for ten days.

On 8 July, the CRA asked that a reconnaissance be made for a Flash Spotting base overlooking suspected gun areas. However, the CRA would not allow the Flash Spotting base as selected to be manned, owing to the risk to observers and directed that a base further back be established. On the following day the Recce and survey of the rear Flash Spotting base was commenced and completed by 1500 hours. The CRA told the unit not to occupy the posts until the following day, as the signal personnel had not been able to provide the communications.

With the final surrender of the Japanese on 18 August 1945, the act was completed, and troops were listed for return to Australia on a priority system based on years of service. The first three members left on the 20th. Until the end of August, A and B Troop carried out surveys for the engineer store dump and railway survey. The 2/7 Survey Battery was slowly wound down but in its three years of existence, it had performed all tasks allocated with pride and distinction**. 2/7 Survey Battery was disbanded in Sydney in December 1945.**

**The Militia Survey Batteries**

**3Survey Bty RAA**

Under command of Major Mick Malloy conducted Survey work around the area of Eumundi (SE QLD) and on the Atherton Tablelands before active Service in Lae, Finschhafen and Bougainville.

**3 Survey Bty RAA**

Raised

1942 August Warwick Farm NSW under Command CRA 3 Div

1942 Sept Coolum Beach Qld;

1942 Dec Eumundi Qld;

1943 Mar Haughton Valley Qld; under Command CCRA 2 Corps

1943 Aug Kiari Qld under Command 7, 9 Divs Lae, Wondecla Qld, Dumpu, Finschhafen.

1944 Jul Kiari Qld under Command 11 Div

1944 Aug Mapee (Q);

1945 Feb Bougainville under Command 3 Div

Disbanded; 1945 Oct

**5Survey Battery RAA**

Raised;

* 1942 August Warwick Farm NSW Under Command CRA 5 Div
* 1942 Sept Townsville Qld Under Command CCRA 2 Corps
* 1943 May New Guinea
* 1943 Sep Dobodura, Finschhafen, Rai Coast
* 1944 Jun Mililat
* 1944 Dec Alexishafen Under Command 5 Div
* 1945 Feb New Britain
* Disbanded; Oct 1945.

**8 Survey Battery RAA**

(2 Flash Spotting Bty) (Sometimes referred to as 2**/**8 Survey Bty in reference to original title 2 Flash Spotting Battery**)**

* Aug 1943 Reorganised and renamed under Command CRA 9 Div
* Oct 1943 Kiari Qld under Command CCRA 1 Corps
* Nov 1943 under Command CRA 3 Div
* Mar 1944 Wongabel Qld
* May 1944 Ravenshoe Qld under Command CRA 9 Div
* Mar 1945 Morotai and Borneo.
* Disbanded: Jan 1946

**Final disposition Svy Batteries.**

In August 1945 towards the end of the final campaigns leading to the Japanese surrender, the disposition of survey batteries was;

* 2/6th Survey Battery 6th Division, Aitape, PNG
* 2/7th Survey Battery 7th Division, Balikpapan
* 3rd Survey Battery 3rd Division, Torokina, New Britain
* 4th Survey Battery 11th Division, New Britain
* 5th Survey Battery 5th Division, New Britain
* 2/8th Survey Bty 9th Division, Morotai and Borneo

By early 1946, all locating units had been disbanded and three years were to pass before locating would next appear.

(Ref. 6)

See. ANNEX A. 1. Locating Organisation Charts

*Survey Units 1925 to 1946*

**Part 2**

**Locating Post WW11**

Locating went into a hiatus with army closing many units, there were 15 men trained in Locating skills who were posted to the Artillery School of Instruction and Victoria Bks Sydney with the aim of Locating Artillery returning in the foreseeable future .

**Korea war 1950–1953**

North Korea invaded the South on 25 June 1950, and swiftly overran most of the country. In September 1950 United Nations force, led by the U.S., intervened to defend the South, and following the Incheon Landing and breakout from the Pusan Perimeter, [rapidly advanced into North Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Offensive,_1950). As the UN force neared the border with China, Chinese forces intervened on behalf of North Korea, shifting the balance of the war again.

Whilst no Australian Artillery Locating units fought in the Korean War, individual gunners served with the infantry, and artillery units from New Zealand and Britain. Both the Commonwealth forces and the American forces employed Locating units in Korea and two Australian Locators, were attached to these Units. Captains Eric Nowill (later Lt. Colonel) and John Stevenson (later Major General) spent some months with the locating battery, which was part of the 61st Light Regiment, Royal Artillery. **Fighting ended on 27 July 1953, with an armistice** that approximately restored the original boundaries between North and South Korea (Ref 7)

**Revival Locating**

In 1948, the Government embarked on an ambitious plan to reorganise the Army into a combat ready force of 70,000 troops, to consist of a 19,000 permanent force Australian Regular Army (ARA) and 50,000 volunteer Citizen Military Force (CMF). The Army never reached the targets set and according to the defence report of 1963, the maximum strength reached in 1950 was 14,543 ARA and 18,236 CMF.

The aim was to raise a permanent ARA Brigade group (1st Infantry Brigade Group), plus two CMF infantry divisions (2nd Division based in NSW and 3rd Division based in VIC) and a CMF Infantry Brigade Group in WA. Also, to be raised was an Armoured Brigade Group based in VIC and NSW and Corps Troops.

Included on the Order of Battle (ORBAT) were:

* 2 Div Locating Bty, South Head, NSW.
* 3 Div Locating Bty, Richmond, VIC.
* 1 Corps Observation Regiment, South Head, NSW and St Kilda, VIC.

To commence this study ten Australian officers were dispatched to the British School of Artillery, Larkhill, Wiltshire, England. These Officers would study Counter Mortar tactics by Gun Regiments, locating methods by Sound Ranging (radio link) and the new method of Radar Location**.** The responsibility of structuring the new Artillery Locating Unit to fill Australian needs was assigned to these officers.

In 1951 Captain John Stevenson attended a long Observation Course at Larkhill, England and was subsequently attached to 7 Armd Div Locating Battery in Germany for 4 Months. Upon his return to Australia, he was posted to 4 Obs Tp, 1Fd Regt at Georges Heights in Sydney. In November of 1952 he was posted to Korea to relieve Eric Nowill

Captains Eric Nowill and John Stevenson returned to Australia, They had both been posted to Korea to obtain combat experience in the practical side of Locating. The lessons learnt by these men were invaluable to the infant locating units that were just emerging.

Captain John Stevenson continued service with the Australian Army, had further active service in South Vietnam and held a number of prestigious postings prior to his retirement as Major- General.

**Raising of Post war Locating Units**

**C Observation Troop**

The first post-war Locating unit had its beginnings **in 1949** when ‘A’ Field Battery, recently returned from Japan and at North Head (North Fort, Manly NSW) moved to a new location Georges Heights, Sydney to form the nucleus of the newly formed 1st Field Regiment. Attached to Headquarter Battery was C Observation Troop. It was organised on a Troop of the pre-war Survey Company. C Observation Troop was a small unit commanded by a Captain, who also filled the role of CBO (counter bombardment officer). It consisted of:

1 Survey Section

1 Sound Ranging Section

1 Flash Spotting Section

The unit was basically a holding place for officers and senior NCOs who had been trained in the Sound Ranging, Survey and Flash Spotting techniques.

**4 Observation Troop**

In early **1950**, C Observation Troop became **4 Observation Troop**, because of new Army policy that all Regular Army units were to be prefixed with a number, with the only exception to this policy being ‘A’ Field Battery. 4 Observation Troop was commanded by Captain John Stevenson.

In July 1950, Prime Minister Robert Menzies, released details of the national service scheme that was to commence in September 1950. This required compulsory military service within the Navy, Army and Air Force, by men aged 18 years. It operated until 1959.

In the Army, the Scheme was structured for three call-ups per year. Training comprised an initial period of 98 days of basic training, followed by three years (later reduced to two years) in a CMF unit. It is estimated that during this period of call up 1950 to 1959, 250,000 young Nashos (the common name given to the national servicemen) served their country in the three services.

There was also a dramatic increase in regular Army enlistment during this period. The age for enlistment was lowered to the age of 17, however a number of restrictions applied. The main restriction for 17-year-old enlistees was that they were not posted to an infantry battalion that was in Korea or due to go. As Australia only had three Battalions at this stage and they were either in Korea or preparing to go, a great number of these younger soldiers were posted to other units.

**4 Locating Battery (104)**

The manning levels in 4 Observation Troop increased such that the unit was redesignated on the **10 June 1952** as **4 Locating Battery**, thus becoming the first Regular Army unit to use the title ‘Locating’. 4 Locating Battery was commanded by Captain John (“Jack”). R. Stoddart.

In January 1954 the results of a study conducted by the School of Tactics and Administration were released and subsequently accepted as doctrine and organisation of the Australian Army. The organisation allowed each Division to have a Locating Battery with provision if needed for a Corps Locating Regiment. Sequential numbering of units was to take place with regular artillery batteries to commence numbering from 100 with ‘A’ Field Battery to be known as 100 ‘A’ Field Bty. On 24 Nov 1954, 4 Locating Battery was redesignated **104 Locating Battery** (remaining under command of 1st Field Regiment).

**31 Locating Bty**

To cater for the influx of personal into the CMF, caused by the National Service Scheme, 31 Locating Battery was raised at Georges Height in Sydney NSW, on 10 June 1952. This battery would have a regular army cadre staff recruited from 4 Observation Troop. It was raised as an independent battery; the Battery Commander was Maj. C. E. H. Rich and it consisted of 75 all ranks.

See Annex A Locating Charts 31 Locating Bty

**131 Divisional Locating Battery**

On the **24 November 1954**, 31 Locating Battery was redesignated **131st Locating Battery (131 Loc Bty).** In 1957 it moved to a new training depot at Pymble NSW, (a northern suburb of Sydney). It remained a CMF unit with the responsibility of Survey and Sound Ranging. 1958 saw the retirement of Major Rich. In 1960, the introduction of the “Pentropic Division” caused many changes in 131 Loc Bty. The Bty became **131 Divisional Locating Battery** with responsibility for Sound Ranging and Flash Spotting. These were later transferred to 20 Loc Regt and replaced with Radar and Transport Sections. The Battery became an integrated ARA /CMF unit with 60% CMF and 40% ARA. It was located at two separate locations, the Survey Section operated out of Pittwater Road, Manly NSW, while the Battery Headquarters, Radar and Transport operated from North Fort, (North Head, Manly NSW) In the **early 1960’s a Light Aid Detachment (LAD) from R.A.E.M.E** was attached. These “Honorary Locators” were to become an integral and valuable asset to Locating.

1960 also marked the end of National Service, which would impact heavily on the Locating units with the loss of manpower,

The Battery Commander at this time was Major Eric Nowill, Lt Donaldson with Sgt. Norm. McManus commanded the survey section. Sergeants. George Addison and “Harry” Webster staffed the radar section. The survey section became very active over the next few years and conducted a number of extensive survey schemes. These schemes included survey of Artillery Ranges at Holsworthy, Tianjara (near Nowra) and Singleton (north of Sydney) in NSW, together with the Naval Firing Range at Jervis Bay and the Ammunition Depot at St. Mary’s in NSW. They also performed their customary role in support of exercises conducted by 1st Field Regiment and the newly formed 4th Field Regiment.

**20 Locating Regiment RAA**

**1954-1960**

The era of 20 Locating Regiment began in early 1954. It was raised to fulfill the requirement for a Corps locating unit. This was felt to be the ideal time to raise such a unit, with the large number of personnel available because of National Service. The initial manning of this unit included what could be described as our “first modern-day Locators”; the majority of these men were WW2 Officers experienced in Survey, Sound Ranging and Flash Spotting.

20 Locating Regiment was initially stationed at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, but then moved to Moore Park Barracks, Sydney. The unit was unusual in that it had no rank-and-file members until 1956.The manning at this stage:

* Commanding Officer Lt. Col. B. Doig
* 2I/c Maj. G.Y.D. Scarlett
* BC (“P” Bty) Maj. J.R. Stoddart
* BC (“Q”Bty) Maj. E.N. Robinson
* Cadre. Capt. C.L. Grigg (Adjutant and Quartermaster)

WO1 Jacques (Corps Arty SM on HQ RAA 1 Corps)

WO2 G. (Rusty) Priest

The manning for 20 Loc Regt was unique in that when it achieved full strength of 350 in early 1957, the rank and file consisted of over 90% National Servicemen. They had been targeted for their higher degree of education and standards so they could cope with the mathematical requirements of the various disciplines. 1957 would also see a change of command for 20 Loc Regt:

* CO Lt. Col. G.Y.D. Scarlett
* 2IC Maj. J. R. Stoddart
* Adjutant Capt. D.G. Bishop

See Annex A for Organization chart 20 Locating Regiment.

**Counter Bombardment Staff Troop RAA**

1954 –1960

As part of the early post‑WW2 organisation the Counter Bombardment Staff Troop RAA was raised at the same time as 20 Locating Regiment at Victoria Barracks, Sydney. It was a CMF unit and was commanded by Lt. Col. Mooney who was an experienced CB Officer from WW2. The unit was attached to and administered by HQ.RAA.1 Corps.

As the name implies the unit was small in numbers of personnel, but sufficient in numbers, to facilitate a 24-hour manning of 3 Teams. A Major commanded each team, with the lowest rank being Bombardier. All "ORs" were highly trained and rewarded for skills by receiving the Arty Surveyors Pay Groupings.

The unit had two primary roles, the first was to collect, collate and disseminate information relating to enemy guns and mortars in the Theatre of Operation, in which it was deployed. The second was to perform an advisory function to the CRA.

**130 Corps Locating Battery RAA**

**1960 – 1966**

20 Locating Regt was disbanded/re-designated **130 Corps Locating Bty RAA** on 1 July 1960 at the end of National Service and moved to Padstow training depot NSW, commanded by Maj. E.N. Robinson. The battery new organisation was:

BHQ

A Troop - Survey

B Troop - Sound Ranging (No 5 recorder).

C Troop - Radar (3 Mark 7 Radar)

Attached to this unit was a troop of RA Sigs designated as 130 Corps Locating Sig Tp (RA Sigs).

The 1960s saw command changes in 130 Corps Locating Battery:

B.Cs

Maj. E.N. Robinson - 1 July 1960 - 17 August 1960

Maj. W.H. Bowie - 18 August 1960 - 26 October 1960

Maj. R.Q. Stanham - 29 October 1960 - 15 August 1962

Maj. G.S. Lane - 16 August 1962 - 30 June 1964

Maj. J.H.B. Johnson - 1 July 1964 - 4 September 1965

Maj. K.K. Bryant -9 September 1965 - 30 December 1965

B.S.Ms

WO2 G.E. Priest - 1 Jul 1960 - 16 December 1965

WO2 G.J Macauley - 17 December - 1 January 1966

The Establishment Strength of 130 Corp Locating Battery was 6 Officers and 133 Ors.

1964 was to see important milestone to the locators, with the attachment of a CMF RAEME workshop to 130 Corps Locating Bty

**130 Gun Locating Battery**

**1966 – 1975**

On the **1st January 1966**, 130 Corp Locating Battery was re-designated 130 Gun Locating Battery and RAEME Workshops was renamed 133 Div Loc Workshops, but remained at Padstow attached to 130 Gun Locating Bty.

The RA Sig Troop ceased attachment and became part of 8 Sig Regt.

Battery Commanders 130 Gun Loc Bty were:

Maj. K.K. Bryant 1 January 66 - 30 June 1970

Capt. G. A. Wearne - 1 July 1970 - 31 July 1972

Maj. I. Scott - 1 August 1972 - December 1974

Maj. B. W. Sonter -December 1974 - 30 June 1975

BSMs

WO2 G.J. Macauley -1January 1966 - June 1967

WO2 K. M. Cossart - June 1967 - May 1970

WO2 I. T. Mills - June 1970

Establishment Strength of unit was 6 Officers and 114 OR’s.

Posted Strength recorded in 1972 was 6 Officers and 55 OR’s

130 Gun Loc Bty new establishment was then:

BHQ

A Troop

B Troop

C Troop

Each Troop comprised a Sound Ranging base with an integral Survey Section. Sound Ranging Set No 5

In 1967 C Troop would cease to exist as the Sound Ranging equipment was refurbished and handed to 131 Div Loc Bty to commence training a new Sound Ranging Section. Members of 130 would assist in the training of the regular army personnel to form a new C troop. This new troop would be posted to Detachment 131 in 1968.

**131 Divisional Locating Battery** entered a new phase when in 1965 the Menzie’s Government, announced the reintroduction of military conscription to sustain Australia’ support for the South Vietnam Government. The conscription selected individuals by ballot (Lottery) on the basis of their ‘birth date’; all young men turning 20 were eligible. The first intake was on the 30 June 1965 and continued until 7 December 1972.During this period the National Serviceman served two years. Around 64,000 served their time, with some 23,000 serving in Vietnam.

131 Div Loc Bty was placed on standby in June 1965, and ordered to raise its strength to wartime establishment, to achieve this the unit received an influx of recruits from the School of Artillery who had been put through courses in Radar and Artillery Intelligence. A great majority of these soldiers were National Servicemen and at the same time, a number of senior NCOs were recruited from the Gun Btys to fill the vacant establishment strength.

In **November 1965** 131 Div Loc Bty became an all-ARA unit and moved to Kokoda Lines, Holdsworth NSW and co-located with 1 Fd Regt RAA. The unit was notified that it would contribute one troop to the newly formed Australian Army Task Force. **In April 1966 a detachment (Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery) was sent to South Vietnam and remained there until May 1971. Members of this detachment were awarded the Unit Gallantry Citation for their service at the Battle of Coral/Balmoral SVN.**

Many National servicemen served with 131 and Detachment 131 where it is estimated at its height in 1967 –1968 the average composition was 65% NS and 35% ARA.

On 16 April 1968, 131st Divisional Locating Battery ceased to be an independent Battery and was placed under command of 19 Composite Regiment. On the 4 August 1969 19 Composite Regiment was redesignated 8 Medium Regiment with 131st Divisional Locating Battery under Command. The manning for 131 was also dramatically changed as those preparing to go overseas were normally absent on courses or leave.

The end of compulsory National Service had a dramatic impact on the regular Army and especially units like 131. Initially the length of service was reduced from 2 years to 18 months. Then in late 1973 it no longer became compulsory. National Service ballots ceased and those in the Army at the time were offered the opportunity to continue their service or take immediate discharge. Virtually overnight, the unit strength went from over 100 to about 20 all ranks.

On the 16 December 1973, the parent unit amalgamated with 12 Field Regiment to form 8/12 Medium Regiment. The Regiment along with 131 Div Loc Bty moved 100 metres to the more spacious and modern Finschhafen Lines, Holsworthy NSW and commenced rebuilding.

131 Div Loc Bty raised a ‘light’ meteorology section (met sect) to provide met support to the Sound Ranging Troop and the gun regiments. At this time, a party of Artillery Meteorologists stationed at the School of Artillery provided limited met support to courses conducted at the School of Artillery and local gun regiments.

In January 1973 Sgt Johnny Mottershead and Gnr Harry Lynas were posted as the first meteorologists in the Bty, the Met Section was formed in 1974/75

In January 1978, 131 Div Loc Bty reverted to under command of 1 Divisional Field Force Group, thereby becoming an independent Battery, and in January 1981, moved from Holsworthy to Enoggerra Barracks, Queensland. In 1981 a Half-Met Section was detached from 131 Div Loc Bty to support courses at the S of A

**1st Reconnaissance, Intelligence, Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment**

**1 RISTA Regt (inc 131 Div Loc Bty)**

1 RISTA Regt was formed as a trial unit on **1 Jul 1995** by amalgamation of 131 Div Loc Bty and 1 Div Int. Coy. The aim of this trial unit was to evaluate and report on operational concepts of capability at the tactical level of related and similar trades and in particular the merging of artillery intelligence and general intelligence

It was a tactical level asset providing combat information and targeting support to the lst Division and other formations and units as appropriate. It comprised a Headquarters, a Target Acquisition Squadron, A Squadron (formerly 131 Divisional Locating Battery), a Human Intelligence Squadron B Squadron (formerly lst Division Intelligence Company) and a Headquarters Squadron (which contained a headquarter elements from both unit as well as RAEME, quartermaster, signals, medical and clerical support elements). The regiment could support up to two formations and offered a diverse range of capabilities at both strategic and tactical levels.

It provided support to formations or units through Operational Readiness Teams (ORT). The composition of the ORT was dependent upon the task and collection requirements of the supported formation and could include any combination of the capabilities embodied within the Regiment. Within the ORT was a Combat Information Centre (CIC); this was the command and processing element, which usually was collocated with the supported headquarters.

Within the CIC was the Target Acquisition Centre (TAC). The TAC interfaced directly with the supported headquarters Fire Support Coordination Centre (FSCC to provide the specialist target acquisition support previously provided by the Artillery Intelligence Office).

The Regiment was Capable of the following tasks:

* Ground surveillance using ground surveillance radars and thermal imagery.
* Tactical target acquisition includes locating enemy guns, mortars and rockets using weapon locating radars and sound ranging equipment.
* Meteorological and survey support to artillery units.
* Tactical electronic warfare interface.
* Interrogation.
* Psychological operations.
* Counterintelligence and field intelligence.
* Intelligence support includes artillery intelligence.
* Military geographical information.
* Imagery interpretation.
* Enhanced combat information and target acquisition support through improved fusion and dissemination of information and data.

The CIC was also responsible for the collection of intelligence from specialist units such as Regional Force Surveillance Units, the Special Air Service Regiment and 2nd Cavalry Regiment. These units usually provided liaison officer support to the CIC.

The unit was commanded by

OC - Lieutenant Colonel Rick Modderman,

Regimental Sergeant Major – WO1 Alex Croot,

WO1 Damien Carroll

Squadron Sergeant Major (SSM) - 'A' Squadron was - WO2 Paul (Pop) Standen.

1 RISTA Regt was disbanded with effect **1 Jul 1997**.

**131 Locating Battery**

The unit was regrouped under its new titles **131 Locating Battery RAA (131 Loc Bty)** and l Int. Coy, both direct command units of the DJFHQ (L). The Bty’s core capabilities were retained, and elements of the unit were incorporated into the embedding trial conducted within 7 TF for the 6 RAR motorised infantry battalion.

Since the RISTA trials 131 Loc Bty has entered a transitional period in which it has reviewed its roles and plotted the future direction of the Bty. The Bty commitment to East Timor has played a significant part in defining the future role.

**East Timor**

131 Loc Bty was committed to providing a 15-man Surveillance Troop for each six‑month Battalion rotation since the transition from INTERFET to UNTAET. Within the 131 Loc Bty Surveillance Troop, there is a 2-man HQ element situated in the fort at BALIBO, consisting of a CAPT and W02 who advise the Bn HQ of the Survl Detachments' capabilities and requirements.

The other 13 personnel within the troop consist of an ADMIN/RECON Sgt and two, six-man detachments comprising a Bdr, LBdr and four Gnrs. These soldiers reside in tent lines at the Bn Echelon which is used as a Forward Operating Base.

The ability of all 131 Loc Bty soldiers to think 'on the go' and adapt to new and ever-changing situations in East Timor, has been a key strength for the current Survl Tp rotation. Essentially, this operation has provided the JNCOs and Gnrs with the chance to improve their basic soldiering skills markedly, whilst enjoying the rare experience of being deployed on operations.

The knowledge gained from these surveillance rotations will ensure that the Battery maintains a sufficient focus in its current approach to 'peacetime' training and into the future.

**131 Loc Bty RAA**

Battery Commanders BSMs

Maj P.R Swinsburg 1997-1998 WO1 D.M Carroll. 1997-1998

Maj C.D Gee 1999-2001 WO1 M.H Gowling 1999- 2002

Maj D. Pearce 2001-2002 WO1 R. Van Oppen 2002

After a short, but certainly noteworthy history under the title **131 Locating Battery RAA,** a change of names occurred on the **10 June 2002 to 131 Surveillance and Target Acquisition Battery RAA** to reflect the changing role.

**20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment**

**Royal Australian Artillery**

 On 09 October 2005, 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment was re-raised to the Order of Battle. As the Australian Army wanted to employ the Uncrewed Aerial Surveillance capability, it was decided to expand 131 Surveillance and Target Acquisition Battery into a Regiment.

Interestingly, although the Regiment was only just forming, it already had troops on operations in Iraq. The AN/TPQ-36 Weapon Locating Radar was initially deployed to support the Al Muthanna Task Group – 2 in Southern Iraq in early 2005. Later in the year, the Radar Troop was reinforced with a Skylark Small UAS section.

By Jan 2006, the first posting to 20 STA Regt occurred and the Regt consisted of RHQ, 131 STA Bty, 132 UAV Bty and a Combat Service Support (CSS) Bty.

As operations in Iraq continued it was clear there was a great desire for more capable UAS. A service contract with Boeing and later InSitu Pacific Limited was entered into whereby, the contractor provided the ScanEagle equipment, maintenance and some operators and the Regt provided the command and most of the operators. By late 2006, the commitment to Iraq had increased to a bty and this commenced a pattern for the next several years.

131 STA Bty deployed to Iraq to support Overwatch Battle Group (West) – 2 in Tallil. The bty consisted of a BHQ providing Intelligence, Surveilllance, Reconnaissance and Target Acquisition support to the battle group, a Weapon Locating Radar Section, a ScanEagle UAS Troop and a Skylark Small UAS Section.

In early 2007, the Regt deployed a small Bty group to provide ScanEagle UAS support to the Reconstruction Task Force in Tarin Kot Afghanistan.

20 STA Regt continued to provide support to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through this period and effectively raised two small btys every six months. By the end of 2013, the Regt had deployed 15 btys – three to Iraq and twelve to Afghanistan.

In 2011, it was decided to cease the Artillery Meteorology and Survey and Weapon Locating Radar capabilities, and the Regt was ordered to concentrate entirely on UAS.

On 09 October 2019, the Regt was re-named the 20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery in a move that saw all RAA units remove their function from their unit title and revert to basic RAA designations. Coincident with that move, the btys were quietly renamed 131 and 132 Btys and became identical in organisation, equipment and function.

After many years of service as part of the Army’s Forces Command, 20 Regt was transferred on 30 November 2022 to the Army Aviation Command and re-allocated to the 16th Aviation Brigade.

As part of the improvement of the overall UAS capability in Army, 20 Regt is planned to expand with the re-raising of 133 Bty in 2024 or 2025.

(Ref 7)

The Regiment continues to grow and improve, maintaining its motto “**Seek to Strike”.**

**ANNEX A. Charts**

**Chart `1**

**Organisation of Companies**

In 1937 1st Company comprised.

HQ

OC – Major Len Heerey

Adjt – Captain Preston Stanley

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

SVY GROUP FS GROUP SRG GROUP

OC - ? Capts. Bill Hunter Lts R. Richards

Sgts – W. Redapple J. Harvey Prior D. Twentyman

J. Smythe S. Smith

**Chart 2.**

**1939 Arty Svy Regt.**

**2/1 Aust Svy Regt R.A.A (A.I.F)**

|  |
| --- |
| Organisation Chart  RHQ  **Flash Spotting Sound Ranging Survey**  **Battery Battery Battery**  **HQ Tp**    **A Tp B Tp C Tp D Tp E Tp F Tp**  Flash Spotting Battery (A and B Troops) Maj. T. W. Short  Sound Ranging Battery (C and D Troops) Maj. J.R. Callow  Survey Battery (E and F Troop) Maj. H. Preston – Stanley |

**Chart 3.**

**Arty Svy Regt Re-organised 26 September 1941**

**2/1 Aust Svy Regt R.A.A (A.I.F)**

|  |
| --- |
| Organisation Chart  RHQ  **1 Battery 2 Battery**  **FS SRG SVY FS SRG SVY**  **B TP C Tp F Tp A TP D Tp E Tp** |

**Chart 4**

***Arty Survey Units 1925 to 1946***

***N.S.W Victoria***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1925 Jul |  |  | **1 Arty Svy Coy**  A.G.A.  ⏐ |  |  | 1925 Nov | **2 Arty Svy Coy**  A.G.A.  ⏐ |  |
| 1936 |  |  | **1 Arty Svy Coy**  RAA (M)  ⏐ |  |  |  | **2 Arty Svy Coy**  RAA (M)  ⏐ |  |
|  |  |  | ⏐  ⏐  ⏐ |  |  |  | ⏐  ⏐  ⏐ |  |
| 1940 |  |  | **1 Survey Regt**  RAA (M) | Unit HQ moved to southern command |  | **🡪->>>** | **2 Survey Regt**  RAA (M)  ⏐ |  |
| Formed independent Batteries. | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | ⏐ | ⏐ | ⏐ |
| 1942 | **1 Svy Bty**  **⏐** | **3 Svy Bty**  **⏐** | **5 Svy Bty**  **⏐** | **2 Flash Spotting Bty** |  | **2 Svy Bty**  **⏐** | **4 Svy Bty**  **⏐** | **4 Flash Spotting Bty** |
|  | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ |  | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ |
| 1943 | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | **2/8 Svy Bty**  ⏐ |  | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ |
| 1944 | (disbanded Nov 1944) | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ |  | ⏐  ⏐ | ⏐  ⏐ | (disbanded Jun 1944) |
| 1945 |  | (disbanded Oct 1945) | (disbanded)Oct 1945) | Attached to 1 Aust Hvy Regt  CD New Guinea |  | ⏐  ⏐ | (disbanded Oct 1945) | “members Merged with 2/3 FS Bty” |
| 1946 |  |  |  | (disbandd Jan 1946) |  | (disbanded Mar 1946) |  |  |

Drawn by K.Ayliffe

**Chart 5.**

**31 Locating Bty**

**Based on Counter Bombardment Troop**

|  |
| --- |
| **1952**  31 Locating Battery[[1]](#footnote-1)  BHQ    SVY Tp SRG Tp RAD Tp |

**Chart 6.**

**20 Locating Regiment**

**1954 - 1960**

HQ BATTERY

“P” BATTERY

“Q” BATTERY

FLASH SPOTTING TROOP

SOUND RANGING TROOP

RADAR TROOP

SURVEY TROOP

SRG Troop Equipped with No 5 Pen Recorder Unit. Radar Troop Equipped with 3 MK 7 Radar

**Chart 7**

**Australian Regular Army 1949 to Current Day**

Drawn By K. Ayliffe

POST WW2 LOCATING UNITS to current

**1949** C Observation Tp (ARA)

**1950** 4 Observation Troop (ARA

**1952** **10-Jun** 31 Locating Bty

(CMF) 4 Locating Battery (ARA)

**1954** **March** 20 Locating Regiment 130 CB Staff Troop CMF/ ARA Cadre CMF

**1954** **24-Nov**

(Trg Staff)

131 Div Loc Bty 104 Div Loc Bty (ARA) CMF

**1955** **21**-**Nov**  132 Div Loc Bty CMF

**1957** Locating wing School of Artillery 101st Field Battery

**1960** 131 Div Loc Bty 130 Corps Locating Battery CMF/ARA CMF

**1965** **20-Sep**

131 Div Loc Bty 133 Div Loc Bty ARA CMF

**1966** 130 Gun Locating Bty ARA/CMF

**1975**

**1980 Queensland**

**1985** 131 Div Loc Bty

ARA/ARes

**1987**

Disbanded Disbanded

**1995 1 RISTA REGT ( 1 battery)**

**1997 131 Loc Bty**

**2002 10 June 131 Surveillance and Target Acquisition Battery RAA**

**2005 9 October 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment RAA**

**2019 9th October  20th Regiment RAA**

**Chart 8.**

**Organisation Chart. 20 Regt.RAA**

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Note: SUAS Tp would serve from 2017 – 2020 when it was closed. It Played an important role for the unit and Army that it has been left on this organisational chart as it earned its place.

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